Is Western Civilization Universal?

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Is Western Civilization Universal?

Section :1.

One of the most blindly accepted assumptions shared by leaders of thought throughout the world is that modern western civilization is universal and that the drastically changed conditions resulting from recent scientific and technological advances have rendered the pre-industrial heritage of all non-European peoples obsolete. Expressing this view, David Reisman, an American-Jewish sociologist, declares:

> The ethnocentric predicament is confounded by failure to realize that modernization appears as westernization by historical coincidence. Modernity is primarily a state of mind — expectation of progress, propensity to growth, readiness to adapt oneself to change. The nations of the North Atlantic area first developed the social processes — secularization, urbanization, industrialization, popular participation by which this state of mind came to prevail. The Western model is only historically western. Sociologically it is global. The recent history of the Soviet Union and Japan shows how effectively these processes modernize societies that are geographically remote from the West. The identical process reappears in virtually all modernizing societies on all continents of the world, regardless of variations in race, colour or creed. That the theoretical model presented in this book has been validated by flow of events since its first publication in 1958 is highly gratifying to me as social commentator on our world. It is equally gratifying to me as a social scientist that

the empirical structure of the model has been validated by other researchers working in every area of the globe.[1]

To justify this wholesale cultural genocide, since World War II a veritable library has been written by the leaders of American scholarship, uncritically extolling the modernization of this or that country in Asia and Africa. Before 1945 colonial dominated Asia and Africa were stigmatized as "backward." During the following decade and a half, the non-European world was referred to by the milder rebuke – "underdeveloped." Since 1960 this term has been replaced by the euphemism – "The developing countries." Proudly boasts Daniel Lerner, an American-Jewish professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: "The United States is presiding at a general reorganization of the ways of living throughout the entire world."[2]

The modernization (or, more accurately speaking, the westernization) of the non-European world is assumed by contemporary scholars as the natural historical product of a mechanically evolutionary process — inevitable and irreversible. Just as the human race is the culmination of biological evolution, so western civilization is the apex of historical and cultural evolution. Therefore, according to this reasoning, to question the supremacy of contemporary Western culture is tantamount to defying the law of evolution — to rebel against Progress, against the very law of nature itself. The progress from the low, primitive culture to ever more and more highly advanced civilization is not only desirable but an immutable law of nature. Since every change is an improvement along the road to progress, the newest is always the best and any attempt to defend older or previously established standards means retrogression to a more constricted existence.

Western men need only reflect on the titanic struggles whereby over the course of centuries, medieval lifeways were supplanted

1 *The Passing of the Traditional Society : Modernizing the Middle East.* Daniel Lerner, with an introduction by David Reisman, the Free Press, a division of Macmillan Co., New York, 1964, pp. viii-ix.

2 *Ibid.*, p 43.

by modernity. Hindsight now summarizes these struggles as "the Age of Exploration," "The Renaissance," "The Reformation," "the Age of Enlightenment," the "Industrial Revolution." But well we know that this historical sequence worked itself out through millions of individual lives; that many suffered, others prospered while their world was being reshaped in the modern image. In the end—and the end is not yet—all men of the West had acquired a new style of life.

A similar process is now underway in the Middle East. The underlying tensions are everywhere the same—village versus town, land versus cash, illiteracy versus enlightenment, resignation versus ambition, piety versus excitement. In Turkey, a grocer, exhilarated by the sight of a modern city, must live out his life in a traditional village; in Iran, a newly entrepreneurial peasant proudly owns his first store-bought suit but rarely dares to wear it among his envious fellows: in Jordan, an illiterate Beduin chief professes the tribal law of the desert but plans to send his son abroad to school; in Lebanon, an educated Muslim girl loves the cinema but fears her orthodox parents; in Egypt a young engineer has eaten pork in the West and seeks atonement in *al Ikhwan al Muslimun*. The people of the area today are unified not by their common solutions but by their common problems; how to modernize traditional lifeways that no longer "work" to their satisfaction. Some seek salvation in past pieties—the recourse to Islamic solidarity providing in this sense a parallel to the Crusades which, in the name of Orthodoxy, hastened the passing of medievalism and the coming of modernity in the West.

Underlying the ideologies there pervades the Middle East a sense that the old ways must go because they no longer satisfy new wants. A world orientalist conference of leading Islamists recently concluded: "The disorder and poverty which rage in the Middle East seem incapable of being remedied except by a general modernization of these countries. But although

Modernization is a tangible fact, Muslim solidarity is only a fleeting, variable, uncertain supposition. Modernization poses the same basic challenge – the infusion of a rationalist, positivist spirit against which, the orientalists seem agreed, "Islam is absolutely defenceless."

This observation implies no ethnocentrism. The Western model of modernization exhibits certain components and sequences whose relevance is global. The model evolved in the West is an historical fact. From the West come the stimuli which undermine traditional society in the Middle East, for the reconstruction of a modern society that will operate efficiently in the world today, the West is still the indispensable model. What the West is, the Middle East seeks to become. [3]

The key to understanding the mentality is the excessive emphasis placed on the value of change, innovation, newness and youth as the supreme and Ultimate Good and the corresponding contempt for anything old (including old people), the past, and tradition. Along with all the long-established religions, Islam, its civilization and its institutions, are Condemned and rejected on the pretext that any order based on a Divine law revealed fourteen hundred years ago, could not possibly be valid and relevant to modern life.

The conception of the Qur'an as a practical handbook of rules for daily life is feasible for people who still live in a beduin desert setting much like that in which Muhammad addressed his vivid message of Allah. The historic development of public communication has been largely the work of groups excluded from the majority Arab-Muslim syndrome. The religious diversities and political rivalries in the Middle East suggest that a collective identity symbolized by Pan-Islam can hardly be viable. Indeed, such sentimental sorties into the symbolism of a majestic past have mainly obscured the conditions of genuine area unity in the future. The key is modernization. The top

3. *Ibid*, pp 43-47.

policy problem has been for Middle Eastern leaders to choose between Mecca or mechanization and how they can be made compatible.[4]

The concept of unrestricted accelerating Change as the supreme Good, based philosophically on Darwin's theory of evolution and practically on the scientific and technological revolution, is the pretext always used to justify the wholesale and indiscriminate destruction of all non-European civilizations and the universal establishment of Western cultural domination. The following views, expressed by the best-known of all American anthropologists, are typical of this thought:

It is my firm belief that American civilization is not simply the last flower to bloom on the outmoded tree of European history, doomed to perish in a common totalitarian holocaust, but something new and different. American civilization is new because it has come to rest on a philosophy of production and plenty instead of saving and scarcity and because the men who built it have themselves incorporated the ability to change and change swiftly as need arises. For three centuries, men of vastly different ways of life have come to America, left behind their old language, their old attachments to land and river, their betters and subordinates, their kin, their old joint families and their icons, and have learned to speak, walk, to eat and dress in a new fashion.

As we have learned to change ourselves, so we believe that others can change also and we believe that they will want to change, that men only have to see a better way of life to reach out for it spontaneously. We conceive of them as seeing a light and following it freely (pp. 19-20) . . . The speed with which European immigrants adpated to Amrican life was largely due to entering a world where everyting was different, to which one brought only the clothes in which one stood and which were easy to discard. There was no old house style to remind one of the old social relationships that no longer held. Instead, a different kind of house lived in by those who

4. *Ibid.*, p. 403.

practised the different kind of relationship was ready to support the change. Children who came home from school to insist that a good American breakfast contained orange juice and cereal, stormed up American steps and banged American doors; children became far more active and free in the American environment; jumped on American sofas - if the springs were damaged, there was at least no physical reminder of three generations of ancestors who had never jumped on any kind of sofa as children.

So the culture in which purposeful change must be introduced by an Ataturk or an enterprising Maharajah—the whole pattern is transformed at once, with as little reminder of the past as possible to slow down the new learning or make that learning incomplete and maladaptive. (pp 372-373).

Once the wild buffalo is destroyed, the once open plains enclosed, the spear and the bow and arrow rendered useless, and any need for lasting relationship with Civilization develops, the simple peoples of the world have to change. Neither their clothes nor their manners, their economic ideas or their political habits fit them to live in the modern world as they are. It is then up to those societies which have already invented ways of life compatible with these modern innovations to share their cultural patterns in entirety with the peoples who wish to have them. Those who wish to share and have their children share the benefits Civilization has made possible for mankind must change from one whole pattern to another. While it is dreadfully difficult to graft one foreign habit on a set of old habits, it is much easier and highly exhilarating to learn a whole new set of habits, each reinforcing, as one moves — more human than one was before because one has learned to do one more complicated human thing — completely new. (pp. 376-377).[5]

5. Margaret Mead, *New Lives for Old*, a Mentor Book, New American Library, New York, 1956

Is the philosophy of Change a universal value? Does it really justify Western civilization's claim to universality? The following critical observations by an intelligent observer of the American social scene prove that far from being a constructive force, leading to a hopeful future, the absence of stability is tantamount to nihilism, disintegration, and the ultimate destruction of all human ties :

> Future shock is a time phenomenon, a product of the greatly accelerated rate of change within a society. These three powerful forces are:
>
> acceleration, novelty, and diversity. When we speak of the pace of daily life, what we actually mean is the rate at which things, places, people and other componenents of the environment turn over in our lives. It is the duration of our relationships with each of these that, in fact, determines the pace of life, and New Yorkers tend to have shorter, more temporary links with the environment than anyone else. Even our ties with architecture, precisely that part of the physical environment that in the past contributed most heavily to man's sense of permanence, are now short-lived.
>
> We tear down neighbourhoods and put up new ones at a mind-numbing rate. That the duration of our ties with the physical environment is shrinking is also underscored by the rise of our whole throw-away economy. Technology leads to physical objects that are cheaper to throw away than to repair. The child quickly learns that home is a processing machine through which objects flow, entering and leaving at a faster and faster rate of speed. From birth on, he is embedded inextricably in a throw-away culture.
>
> The rental revolution goes hand in hand with the trend toward disposability. In 1969, for the first time in the United States, more building permits were issued for apartment construction than for private homes. It is particularly "in" among our young people who want "minimum involvement" housing.
>
> Today most of us are moving around at high speed like particles in an accelerator so that our physical ties with any one

place grow less and less durable. New York is filled with "executive high mobiles" for whom repeated residential relocation is simply an accepted part of the job. In 70 U.S. cities, including New York, average residence in one place is less than four years.

The fact is that the average urban person today deals with more people in the course of a month than a feudal peasant dealt with in a lifetime and as the number of different people we deal with grows, the average duration of a relationship shrinks. The greater the mobility of the individual, the greater the number of brief, face-to-face encounters, human contacts—each one a relationship of sorts, fragmentary and, above all, compressed in time. We seldom stop to consider how few of the 66 billion human beings who preceded us on this planet experienced this high transience in their human ties.

Job mobility is another force increasing the turn-over of people in our lives. The epitome of job transience is found in a novel industry that has recently become popular. Something like 500 companies in the United States now "rent" workers to industry –labourers, secretaries, engineers, models, people who step into a new job for a few hours or a few weeks and then "plug-out." The President of the American Girl Service, one of the larger "Temp" companies says: "A successful temporary worker not only has to have ordinary job skills or learn them fast, but must know how to make and break relationships with other people rapidly."

Throughout the high-technology nations but particularly in the Mega cities like New York, we find therefore the same relentless pressure towards temporary human ties. The more temporary our ties, whether with things, places or people, the faster the daily pace becomes. Instead of conversations, we send high-speed communications back and forth among ourselves and we search constantly for all sorts of magic to accelerate friendship, encounter groups, sensitivity training,

sex-on-the-run, all intended to produce intimacy in a high-transience environment.[6]

In addition to the argument of rapid change rendering everything old and obsolete, Western cultural domination over non-Europeans is also justified on the pretext that their all-round well-being and happiness is infinitely improved under the new order. Therefore, it is argued, the destruction of the indigenous culture is no loss:

A deep problem of values is embedded in the life histories of these men in motion. The moral issues of modernization often are reduced to this : Should they want what they want ? Since they want what we have, if we resist, the temptation to adjudicate conflicting preferences among others, at least long enough to see how they consider these options themselves then we have a sounder basis than our own conventional Values for moral judgment For example, a very powerful finding in our study is that Middle Easterners who are modernizing consider themselves happier than those who retain the traditional lifeways. This is in striking contrast with the impressions conveyed by some observers often from highly modern settings themselves who feel that the undermining of traditional ways by new desires must result in a net loss. But these regrets are not felt by the modernizing peasants, nomads or beduins themselves or at least felt less disapprovingly by them than by the moderns who study them and love the familiar way they used to be. (pp. 73-74).

Whatever the merit the conventional dichotomy of urban anomie versus rural stability may have possessed once upon a time, somewhere, in the Middle East today people talk as if they never heard such nonsense. In every country the rural villagers declare themselves the most unhappy fellows. In every country the modernizing individuals are considerably less unhappy and the more rapidly the society around them is being modernized,

6. Alivin Toffler, "Future Shock," *Dialogue*, Washington D. C., Vol. IV, No. 2, 1971, pp. 3-8.

the happier they are. The Index of happiness rises as more people are able to get what they want. Traditional society is passing from the Middle East because relatively few Middle Easterners want to still live by its rules.

As the patriarchal family loses command, other ancient behavioral routines are opened to question. As men move out of the lifewavs of rural subsistance, agriculture, the women are no longer counted as essential units of the family's total labour force. The housewife often remains a conservative influence but the daughter takes advantage of her new opportunities for education, adventure, and excitement. As the boy is no longer his father's shadow, the girl is no longer her mother's replica Thus mobility liberates the newer generations of both sexes and the foundations of traditional society are undermined.

Transition customs and institutions have proved utterly defenceless against the inroads of the mass-media, especially the cinema. Where the impact of the cinema has been massive and Sustained as in modern Lebanon, the results are highly visible. Says Albert Hourani, a prominent Lebanese scholar:

"The process of change is being speeded by one manifestation of western civilization above all—the film which expresses a conception of the relationships between men and women which are far from those prevalent in the Islamic world. (pp. 398 400) [7].

What are the chief attractions of Western culture for the modernizing youth in non-European lands?

One sad young girl, her eyes red from crying at the start of the interview, had been educated in Beirut but was living with her wealthy family in the only decent house of an impoverished village. Despite her own relatively comfortable life, she was deeply disappointed, she was bitter against the life of women in the Near East where Women is not respected but treated like an animal with no feeling."

7. *The Passing of the Traditional Society:* opcite.

This girl's discontent is stimulated by her constant exposure to American communications. "In Lebanon" she says, "wherever we walk, we see something American — books, magazines, goods, schools. In our school, nearly every lecture in Friday's assembly was about America. The films we were shown in school were all about life there."

Her favourite Hollywood film depicted Ava Gardner's success in turning a respectable man into a gambler. This pleased her "because it shows the influence of a woman on a man's life. "

The allure of a foreign environment increases among those who, having formed larger expectations, feel deprived in their native milieu. Another young girl, chafing under parental restraint, would like to live in America. She says: "People there are free in all ways, especially women. They are free to come and go, to choose the life they want to live. They are independent and responsible only for themselves with no father or mother to count their steps and control their movements or behaviour."

America represents a life of fun, luxury and good times for transitional females. Says one: "I love American films because they depict a way of life without a touch of drabness. It is full of fun."[8]

Is the accelerating pace of westernization of non-Europeans really promoting a genuine improvement in their happiness, health, social, mental. and moral wellbeing? Let us now see what this "modernization" means to the black people in Africa :

Abel Ngasa is a thin, quick-moving coffee-brown man of 46. He happens to be a Zulu but his story would be much the same if he came from any one of a thousand other tribes. He lives just outside a South African city in a racially segregated government

8. *Ibid*, pp. 200-203.

housing project called Newtown. Abel is a Christian, a deacon in his church, a Sunday-school choir-master, a competent electrician, a devoted family man. Yet on three nights of any average week, he will come home sodden drunk, rage at his eldest son, frighten his babies and beat his wife. He is a sick man. Yet his clinical diagnosis — chronic malnutrition, chronic alcoholism, cirrhosis of the liver — do not explain his ill-health. To understand that, one must know at least a little of his life history.

He was born on raw farmland 100 miles away. The fifth of eight children, he grew up in a sprawling company of parents and grandparents, sisters, cousins, brothers, and uncles. Every one of them worked and no one went hungry. It was a deceptively simple world. When Abel was five, he cared for the chickens, as his older brother had done before him, when he was six, he watched the goats, when he was seven, he herded the cattle. If his mother had to work in the fields there were plenty of sisters, cousins and aunts to hold the newest baby. If someone was sick, he was nursed. His child-rearing was the same as his mother and father had.

Two things changed the pattern. When Abel was seven, he went to a Christian mission school and began to learn about another world. When he was nine, he was catapulted into that other world; his father, mother, two brothers and he moved to the city. Their house was different, their food was different, the people were different; suddenly the world was full of strangers behaving strangely, speaking different languages. The family was different too there was no supporting network of relatives. The fields and cattle were gone; people worked for money. There was always talk of police and passes, jobs and jails. Here Abel Ngasa grew up, went to school, learned a trade, learned to drink, speak English, became a Christian and married.

Years later, his family moved to Newtown. After the smells, the filth and squalor of the slums, Newtown looked pleasantly suburban. Its roads are paved. Some of the houses have electric light; all have running piped water. Scattered among the houses are churches, schools, a community centre, shopping centre, and a community health clinic. But anomie and chaos are here too. Ninety per cent of the parents are rural born; 75 per cent of the children are city-born. Of the children under 16, a third are not living with both parents; 23 percent of the Newtown mothers work away from home. Adolescents are on their own; there are juvenile delinquent gangs and today every third baby is illegitimate.

A quick look at the next generation — at Hamilton Ngasa, first of the city-born—reveals the same story of change, but even more rapid. In his mid-twenties, Hamilton is an entrepreneur, half-owner of an old lorry, operator of a laundry round. In his twenty-odd years of life, he has been successively school-boy, truant, delinquent, convict, factory-worker, vagrant, syphilitic, and hospital patient, Christian agnostic and African nationalist. Now tightlipped and self-contained, he has a cold wariness of white people and contempt for his father's intermittent efforts to play the patriarch.

On a card in the Newtown health centre, is a list of clinical diagnoses for Evelyn and Hamilton and all the others who are crowded into Abel Ngasa's two-roomed house. Frank, aged 21, is delinquent and an alcoholic and has been treated twice for venereal disease. Holly, aged 16, a gifted high school student, has anemia. Elizabeth, aged 14, is infested with roundworms. Faith, aged ten, is blind in one eye. Mabel, aged 9, has tuberculosis. The younger children suffer from malnutrition, ringworm and decaying teeth.

The fundamental problem has been most forcibly stated by the U.S. diplomat, George Kennan. "Whenever the authority

of the past is too suddenly and too drastically undermined; wherever the past ceases to be the reliable reference book of human problems; wherever the experience of the father becomes irrelevant to the trials of the son — there the foundations of man's inner health and stability begin to crumble. These, unfortunately, are the marks of an era of rapid technological and social change." [9]

Now let us travel half-way around the world to see how the same process of social, cultural and moral disintegration has afflicted America's nearest neighbours — the Indian population of Mexico :

Dr. Oscar Lewis' study of five ordinary days in five different Mexican families, illustrates the little recognized dynamics of poverty. To me; among the striking things about these families are their general malaise, the rarity among them of genuine happiness or contentment, the rarity of affection. We may note that the most dreary, the most utterly loveless, the most hateful are the wealthy Castro's handled with a magnificiently brutal frankness, a family to dismay Chekhov,[10] to make Zola's [11] hair stand on end. Is this reasonable? Can we believe it? Can we accept as characteristic the repeated elements of decaying or decayed religion, broken families, unions out of wedlock and adulteries?

All the families described in this book consist of people whose culture is in transition. Here is the greatest export of the Euro-North-American family of nations — a new material culture that shatters the nonmaterial cultures of all the peoples it reaches and today is reaching them all. All over the world, people are hating the light-skinned machine-age nations and busily

9. Dr. H. Jack Geiger, "Waking Sickness — Scourge of the New Africa," *Saturday Review*, New York, 1962.

10. famous Russian playwright (1860-1904).

11. famous French novelist and journalist (1840-1902).

aping them. One of the first returns they receive is cultural desolation.

Let us look again at the Castro's. They have achieved a North American material culture. They own a two-toned car and plumbing; they even eat a North American breakfast. At the end of the day, Senora Castro curls up with a Spanish translation of an American bestseller. Yet they have not really entered modern Western civilization; they are merely uprooted, divorced from the enrichments of their own sources; without having received any substitutes other than material objects; they are sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, being without love, true to nothing.

The malaise I am discussing extends over the whole world. A portion of the dynamics of the poverty of the so called "under-developed" countries is that in many instances, an old, physically satisfactory, primitive existence is replaced by an unsatisfactory, impoverished existence as peoples become caught in the economic web that is inseparable from the extension of the Age of Technology. Typically, the cultural shock results in a breakdown of the basic social unit - the family. Most "whole" cultures, in which people follow long-established adaptations to themselves, each other and their circumstances, reward their participants with what can be loosely termed as "satisfaction." It is characteristic of breaking or broken cultures that they no longer give satisfaction; no longer make life worth living [12]

The worst sufferers of this universal social, cultural, and moral breakdown are the children. The decay of religion, the weakening of kinship ties, and the extreme contempt of the younger for the older generations in their blind, uncritical worship of Change for its own

12. Oscar Lewis, *Five Families, Family Life in Mexico Today*, introduction by Oliver La-Farge A Mentor Book, New American Library, New York, 1959, pp viii-x.

sake, are all guaranteed to make the new generation unruly, disrespectful, ill-mannered and to lead to hooliganism and delinquency.

> Isabel Castro's three sons were disrespectful, ill-mannered and cruel not only with each other but also with their mother and sister and especially with the servants. In school, they were poor students and behaviour problems. Rolando and Manuel had already been expelled from several schools. Rolando, only fourteen, had begun to develop effeminate mannerisms and the principal of his present school had alarmed Isabel by advising her to take him to a psychiatrist.[13]

To justify its claim to universality, a civilization must propagate universal moral and spiritual values. Contemporary culture is conspicuous by the complete absence of such values. Ideologically, it has nothing to offer but naked selfishness, irresponsible plesaure-seeking and pure and unadulterated materialism.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

Is Western Civilization Universal?

Section:II.

The most conclusive proof of western civilization's parochial character is the devastating fact, despite all propaganda to the contrary, that it is exclusively reserved for white Europeans only. From ancient Greece to the present day, one of the blackest stains on the reputation of this culture is the persistence of racial discrimination which makes it virtually impossible for non-whites to participate with the whites on equal terms. The black man may become a Christian ; he may adopt an English name ; he may follow the Western mode of life ; he may earn the highest university degrees with honours and distinguish himself in the professions but still he can never be the social equal of the white man. No matter how high his attainments may be, the non-white is always inferior to the white. This is the real reason for the present poverty and backwardness of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Were Western civilization truly universal, non-Europeans would have risen to the same scientific. cultural and economic standard as the Europeans and enthusiastically participated in the arts and sciences on equal terms. The Westernization of the non-European world would result in a great cultural renaissance and scores of educated, brilliant and cosmopolitan Asians and Africans would make significant contributions to the progress of humanity in every field. But the fact nobody can deny is that this has never happened. Rather, westernization of Asia, Africa and Latin America has produced an unprecedented intellectual sterility and desolation. The most striking evidence of the failure of the non-European world to participate on equal terms in modern culture is the rarity of non-whites and non-Europeans on the list of Nobel Prize winners. In 1913, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. a Bengali Hindu. was

awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature; in 1930, another Hindu, Sir Chandrsekhara V. Raman, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics; in 1949, Hideki Yukawa, a Japanese, was also awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics; Dr. Ralph J. Bunche was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950: in 1956 Juan Ramon Jimenez a Puerto Ricon writer was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, and in 1957 two Americans of Chinese origin were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics. In 1960, Albert J. Luthuli of South Africa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as was Martin Luther King Jr. in 1964. Thus out of more than 360 distinguished scientists, writers and statesmen who have been awarded the Nobel Prize since 1901, only nine are non-Europeans and non-whites.[14] This offers the most conclusive proof that despite all westernization, the full benefits of modern learning and cultural opportunities have been denied to the Asians and Africans. Western imperialism is far from dead. Since World War II, cultural imperialism has replaced political imperialism. Today, imperialism, however subtle and indirect, is no less real than it was a century ago.

Cultural imperialism is most aggressive in the educational systems and mass-media of non-European lands. Everywhere its effect is the same producing among the youth inferiority-complexes and complete psychological demoralization, blocking all constructive achievement and creative activity. Thus they cannot create anything original on their own initiative. They can only imitate. Comments the brilliant Lebanese scholar, Albert Hourani :

> To be a Levantine is to live in two worlds or more at once without belonging to either; to be able to go through the external forms which indicate the possession of a certain nationality, religion or culture without actually possessing it. It is no longer to have standard values of one's own, not to be able to create but only able to imitate. It is to belong to no community, and to possess nothing of one's own. It reveals itself in lostness, cynicism, and despair.[15]

14. "The Nobel Prizes," *Readers Digest 1966 Almanac*, Readers Digest Association, Pleasantville, New York, 1965, pp. 584-591.
15. *The Passing of the Traditional Society : Modernizing the Middle East*, op. cit., p. 205.

Now let us look at the devastating effects of this cultural imperialism on a distinct ethnic group which white America finds difficult to assimilate—the Puerto Ricans.

One of the ways in which American education destroys, or tries to destroy, Puerto Rican culture, is the language. From the first day a Puerto Rican child enters school, they tell us: " Only English is to be spoken here." This creates problems because we speak Spanish at home. From the time we start school, the teacher and the white American students start enjoying themselves at our expense. They call us "Spicks" and are always ridiculing us because we can't speak English. They put us to shame and we develop inferiority-complexes.

As soon as the Puerto Rican child enters school, he realizes that the school is more or less all white. You look at the wall and see the breakfast which a typical American family should have: eggs, bacon, milk, fruit juice. You see this and think: How come there isn't any of that at my home? You then feel ashamed and refuse to describe the kind of breakfast you have. Then you continue looking at the wall and you see the houses and that in the homes of white Americans, everybody has a separate room. When you open your readers, the first thing you see is Dick and Jane and the white, blonde-haired, blue-eyed family where papa works and mama stays at home playing the piano and doing little jobs around the house; you see that papa has a car and they have a grand Mother Who lives on a farm. Now this makes us feel Ashamed because as a result of our economic situation here, many of us Puerto Ricans are separated from our families; we have a father here and a mother there. This was my problem and I would say to myself: " I don't have a father" places us Puerto Rican Students In Situation where we can't identify ourselves with those books.

Take history, for example. The only history that is ever studied is the history of Europe and America. They tell us that Abraham Lincoln was a great man because he freed the

slaves but we dont hear a single word about Jose Emeterio Betences. They never tell us that he was the leader of the movement to free all the slaves in Puerto Rico ; so we grow up thinking that we really never had a great man in Puerto Rico : that we haven't really done anything ; that we had a history of our own. This makes us feel inferior ; we think that the Americans are the only ones who are worth anything : that they are the only people who have ever done anything.[16]

The consequences of this cultural imperialism in Pakistan, Turkey, Iran and the Arab world are no different.

Throughout the Middle East, modernist intellectuals were shaped in the Western system of thought and valuation. Many of them went to school in the West or were educated in Western universities between Cairo and Istanbul. They look and act and were trained to think like modern men. (p. 408)..

The progressive young Syrian bureaucrat echoed dozens of respondents interviewed. He said : " When we see the lives of the people in the West at the cinema and compare them with our own lives, we find that we still have a long way to go before attaining their level. The films are like a teacher to us who tells us what to do and what not." (p. 400)

Among the common people, the psychological problems of modernization are much more rudimentary. What is required is to " motivate " the isolated and illiterate peasants and tribesmen who compose the bulk of the area's population to provide them with clues as to what the better things of life might be. (p. 411)[17]

This deep, crushing feeling of inferiority is the most striking psychological result of the bombardment of the non-European world

16. "Cultural Revolution : U.S. Style," *Granma*, Havana, June, 13. 1971, quoted in *Impact International Fortnightly*, London, July 22, 1971, p. 15.

17. *The Passing of the Traditional Society : Modernizing the Middle East*, *op. cit.*

with the Western gospel of materialism. This gives us some understanding of the reasons why, on the list of Nobel Prize winners, not a single Muslim name appears.

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), the great historical philosopher and father of the science of Sociology, possessed a penetrating insight into the motives which irresistibly tempt one people to blindly imitate another :

> The vanquished always seek to imitate their victors in their dress, insignia, beliefs and other customs and usages. This is because men are always inclined to attribute perfection to those who have defeated and subjugated them. Men do this either because the reverence they feel for their conquerors makes them see perfection in them or because they refuse to admit that their defeat could have been brought about by ordinary causes and hence they suppose that it is due to the perfection of the conquerors. Should this belief persist long, it will change into a profound conviction and will lead to the adoption of all the tenets of the victors and the imitation of all their characteristics.
>
> This imitation may come about either unconsciously or because of a mistaken belief that the victory of the conquerors was due not to their superior solidarity and strength but to the inferiority of the customs and beliefs of the conquered. Hence arises the further belief that such an imitation will remove the causes of defeat.
>
> In fact, every country which has powerful conquering neighbours tends, to a large extent, to imitate those neighbours as we see among the Spanish Muslims today in respect to their Christian neighbours. For today, the Spanish Muslims are imitating the Christians in their dress and ornaments and indeed in many of their customs and institutions even to the extent of having statues and pictures on the walls of their houses and shops. *And in this, the careful observer will mark a sign of inferiority.*[18]

18. *An Arab Philosophy of History*. Selections from the muqaddimahby Ibn Khaldun, translated and edited by Charles Issawi. Wisdom of the East Series, John Murray, London, 1950, pp. 53-54.

When Muslim power in Spain was supreme, Christian Spaniards readily adopted the Arabic language and the dress and mode of life characteristic of the Moors even when they remained steadfast in the Christian faith. When that power declined and the Christian monarchs gained ascendency, the process was reversed, as Ibn Khaldun himself witnessed and described. Like the westernized Muslims of today, those Spanish Muslims of Ibn Khaldun's time who imitated the Christians must have considered this the fashionable and smart thing to do. But what was the ultimate fate of those Muslims (along with the Jews) who sought entry into the orbit of European civilization?

Torquemada's instructions to the Inquisition have shown us that the tribunal gave the first encouragement to *Limpieza* by excluding from all public office anyone condemned for Jewish or Islamic practices. Individual authorities quickly extended this disability to any member of the family of those condemned. Soon public bodies everywhere began to exclude any convert, even those who had no quarrel with the Inquisition.

It is at this stage that *Limpieza* ceases to be a defensive mechanism against heresy and becomes openly racist. Since the statutes clearly discriminated against orthodox Catholics simply because of their ancestry, the use of the word "racism" is inescapable. With the success of the statutes, it soon became necessary, when seeking public employment, to prove that one was not descended from any but "Old Christians."

In theory the Inquisition listed the sins of the fathers only up to the second generation and this was supported by the Church canon law. But the zeal of *limpieza* did not stop at this limitation. If it could be proved that an ancestor had either been made to do penance by the Inquisition or was a Moor or a Jew, then his descendants were condemned as "impure" blood and correspondingly disabled from any public office. Therefore it was a supreme necessity for all applicants to public positions to draw up detailed geneologies to prove the "purity" of their lineage. By the end of the 16th century,

geneological proofs of this sort were a compulsory requirement to join the military forces and to seek admission in all of the important colleges and universities. Some applicants were compelled to go through legal processes which lasted for years with all attendant expenses before a proper geneology could be drawn up. Others resorted to perjury to gain posts, thus involving themselves and all their witnesses in heavy fines and infamy when the tribunal discovered their "crime" of "impure" ancestry. Frequently, applicants were disabled simply by the malicious gossip of enemies because even rumours of "impurity" were at times accepted by the courts as valid evidence.

Geneology became a social weapon and in a society where the geneological proof was one's only passport to a career in the Church and State, it may be safely assumed that racism was an integral part of the system of government. The importance of the infamy that was attached to racial "impurity" cannot be exaggerated. The honour of a Spaniard lay in his religion and his race. If either of these were disputed, it would bring shame and disgrace upon himself, his family and all his descendants [19]

This systematic and methodical exclusion of all non-European races, nationalities and cultures from participation in European culture on a plane of social equality has been the consistent and dominant policy of western civilization throughout its history.

The United States of America was proudly proclaimed by its founders as a "great land of opportunity." States the *American Declaration of Independence* (July 4, 1776) which is supposed to embody the highest ideals of secular, humanistic democracy:

> "We hold these truths to be self-evident — that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any

19. *The Spanish Inquisition*, Henry Kamen, a Mentor Book, the New American Library, New York, 1965, pp. 128-130.

> form of Government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to abolish it and to institute a new Government laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness . . . "

But just as much as in Europe, the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" was restricted in America to white people of European origin. From the very inception, the pages of American history have been marred by the curse of racial discrimination. During the greater portion of the 18th-19th centuries, a major share of the revenue of the country was dependent upon the African slave trade. Not only that, but the most esteemed founding fathers of America, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, were both owners of hundreds of slaves.

Although Thomas Jefferson openly condemned slavery as an "abhorrent institution" degrading both the slave and the slave-owner, he continued to hold all of his slaves until his death because to free them would have spelled financial ruin to himself and his family. Jefferson thought that the slaves ought to be freed "eventually" but should be shipped back to Africa because the white and black races could never live harmoniously together in the same society on equal terms. Next to Washington, Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) is considered as the greatest President and noblest humanitarian in American history His life and works are studied in American Schools as the highest expression of American democratic ideals he is most widely known throughout the world to have brought about the freedom of the slaves. But his real views on the Subject of racial equality were revealed in the historic Lincoln -Douglas debates (August-October 1858). Declared Abraham :

> Anything that argues me into an idea of perfect social and political equality with the Negro is but a specious and fantastic arrangement of words by which a man can prove a horse chestnut to be a chestnut horse! (Laughter). I will say here while on this subject that I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it already exists. I believe that I have no lawful right to do so. I have no Intentions Of Introducing Political and Social equality between

the white and black races There is a physical difference between the two which in my judgment will probably for ever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favour of the race to which I belong having the superior position.

I agree with Judge Douglas that the black man is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in colour, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. **I repeat most emphatically that I am not nor ever have been in favour of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races** (applause) - that I am not nor even have been in favour of making voters or jurors of Negroes nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor intermarry with white people and I will

repeat in addition to this that there is a between the white and black races which I believe will forbid the two living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together, there must be the position of the superior and inferior, I, as much as anyone else, am in favour of having the superior position assigned to the white race.[20]

Now the black man has lived on American soil as long as the whites; he is totally integrated into American culture for he knows no other. Almost none have the slightest knowledge of, much less any connection with, their tribal ancestry in Africa. They speak no other language but English; all have adopted English names and are almost 100% Christian. Yet despite the fact that more than a century has elapsed since the Emancipation Proclamation which outlawed slavery, the black man is still considered socially inferior to the white man and race relations remains one of the foremost problems the country must face.

The very blackest of all the pages of American history is the unscrupulous, systematic, methodical dispossession and extermination

20. *Abraham Lincoln: A Documentary Portrait Through his Speeches aud Writings*, Don E. Fehrenbacher, A Signet Classic, New American Library, New York. 1964, pp. 105-106. (Emphasis by M. J.)

of the American Indian. If anything, the fate of the American Indian has been even worse than that of the black man. Yet, instead of suffering the pangs of a guilty conscience, American historians shamelessly justify the deplorable treatment the white colonists meted out to these aboriginals as essential and unavoidable since they were, after all, still savages who had not advanced beyond the Stone-Age stage of culture; and because savagery and civilization could not co-exist in the same society, the former had to make room for the unhampered progress of the latter.

Even today, those who try to defend the rights of the Indian to his lands and property are scorned as "sentimental" and "unrealistic."

The sons of the soil were quick to absorb the benefits of civilization as rapidly as they could. Many of them were superior mentally and physically to the colonists from Europe and, given a fair chance, no doubt would have provided the country with outstanding citizens. Now let us witness the tragic fate of the Five Civilized Tribes who willingly adopted the religion and mode of life of the whites even to the extent of formally requesting the U. S. Government officials admission on the basis of complete loyalty as American citizens as an Indian state in the Union:

> With the influx of new settlement into the southern states (colonies no longer), the world of change spun faster for the Civilized Tribes who turned still more to the ways, fashions and ideas of their white neighbours. The Cherokee built roads, schools, churches and adopted a system of government modeled on that of the United States, and a Cherokee warrior, crippled in a hunting accident, devoted himself to perfecting a system of writing the Cherokee language. He had had no education, and neither spoke nor wrote English, but after 12 years of work produced, in 1821, a workable alphabet of Cherokee characters; the Cherokee studied it with such enthusiasm that within a matter of months, thousands could read and write. A printing press was obtained and in 1828, the Cherokee began publication of a regular newspaper. (p. 217).

When the Spanish domination ended in the South-East, the Five Civilized Tribes were no longer of any use to the U. S. Government as buffer states. White settlers moved in all over the back country. Indian tradesmen and merchants east of the Mississippi were of no further importance. The spirit of the white frontiersmen—"clear the Indians out"—had already outgrown all opposition to become the prime moving force behind American policy when, in 1828, it took over the government completely with the election of Andrew Jackson—the embodiment of the frontier spirit—as President.

One of the first pieces of business for the new administration was the passage of what was known as the "Indian Removal Bill" which became law in the spring of 1830 and was aimed specifically at the powerful intact nations of the South-East—Choctaw, Chicasaw, Cherokee and Creeks. Force was necessary since these nations did not want to move. The states principally involved—Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi—all at once passed legislation outlawing tribal governments and placing the Indian nations under the jurisdiction of the State laws. Indian lands were now wide open for trespass by anyone, including liquor dealers. Bootleggers of liquor crowded into Indian territory and grog shops blossomed like blossoms of spring.

State laws were enacted prohibiting a court from accepting the testimony of an Indian against a white man so that a claim, no matter how fraudulent, brought by a white man against an Indian could not be legally protested. White squatters and land speculators moved in by the swarm, stripping the Indians of their lands and property by fraud, liquour and force. Large numbers of Indians, many of whom had been comfortable and prosperous, sought refuge in the forests or the swamps in terror, divested of their possessions and driven from their homes.

Sometimes they were even divested of the clothes they were wearing by frolicking armed whites. All appeals were referred to a protest to President Jackson whose solution was the wholesale exile of the entire population of the Civilized Tribes to the West at once.

It happened to be an unusually hard winter. The Mississippi River was so choked with ice as to be impassable for days at a time. There was zero weather and heavy snow. But still these Indians had to leave their homes and march to exile, destitute and nearly naked. Cholera appeared in the summer of 1831, setting up a belt of death which halted most traffic but through which the armies of Indian exiles had to be moved, the Federal Government and the states concerned being inflexibly opposed to any delays.

Pressures and harassments not withstanding, the Indians left their homeland with the greatest reluctance. They did not share the white frontiersman's restless passion to be always moving on. The whites could not comprehend the Indian's passionate attachment to their land. "They cannot appreciate the feelings of a man who loves his country," said the Creek chief, Eneah Emathla. Some watching whites were moved and some amused when departing Indians went about touching leaves, trees, rocks and streams in farewell .

So the educated and the ignorant, the good and the bad, those used to high-style gracious living and those from huts in the depths of the forest were herded together, reduced to the lowest common denominator by liquour, degradation, and despair. (pp. 222-224) . Said newspaper stories of the time. "To see a whole people destitute of food — the incessant cry of the emaciated creatures being "Bread! Bread ! " is beyond description. The existence of many of the Indians is prolonged by eating roots and bark of trees. Nothing that can afford nourishment is rejected. however offensive it may be. They beg their food from door to door. It is really painful to see the wretched creatures wandering about the streets haggard and naked. (p. 227).[21]

21. *The American Heritage Book of Indians,* William Brandon, Dell Publishing Co. New York, 1961.

All Indian tribes throughout the continent were treated by the U. S. Government in the same manner, with no apology. During the major portion of the 19th century, the U. S. Government even went so far as to pay groups of outlaws called *vigilantes*, considerable sums of money to rid newly settled territories of Indians. Indians by the thousands were hunted down and slain exactly as one would hunt animals. Though President Andrew Jackson (1892-1837), a fanatical Indian-hater, must bear a large responsibility for these atrocities, he is still uncritically praised in all courses in American history in the schools, colleges and universities, as a great national hero. And to this day, the surviving Indians are the most impoverished, backward and downtrodden of all the peoples in America.

In the western mind today, the Palestinian Arab is the equivalent of the American Indian. Western support for Zionism has strong racial overtones. Zionist propaganda never fails to represent the Jews as white Europeans, the ambassadors of the progress and prosperity of modern western civilization to the benighted East. Simultaneously the Arabs are always depicted as subhuman, uncivilized Asiatics. Writes the late Bartley C. Crum, a pro-Zionist Roman Catholic lawyer, appointed by President Truman in December 1945 as a member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine :

> Cairo was a revelation — and a long step forward in my education. Here for the first time I began in a limited measure to understand the world of Islam. In this hot, sunbaked city, I saw the Arab in his native habitat and native dress, incredib'e numbers wearing their long, single-piece night-gown like robes, representing a degree of poverty and a level of subsistence I had seen nowhere in the Western world and I was sickened. (pp. 146-146) During the train's interminable pauses in Egypt, I had had my fill of desert scenes — the mud hovels, the faceless childern, for so they appeared, wrapped up in the same nondescript robes of their parents, the slow, painful, miserable existence.
>
> But once in Jewish Palestine, the tempo and colour of life changed sharply. Things seemed to quicken, to become More alive. childern, were suddenly no longer tiny bundles of rags

> but yongsters wearing shorts with sturdy arms and legs and open smiling faces, alert and human again, (p. 159). As we drove through the country, I became aware of a remarkable physical phenomenon. Many of the Jewish children I saw were blonde and blue-eyed, a mass mutation that, I was told, is yet to be adequately explained. (p. 192). My gateway to Tel-Aviv was through Jaffa which, possessing the atmosphere of an overgrown Arab village, reminded me of Cairo.
>
> Driving into Tel-Aviv, you saw the houses become more habitable, the streets grow wider and treelined and you realized that Jews had done this because they wanted wide streets, they wanted trees and green places for the children to play in. The Arabs had blighted the land for centuries and now the Jews were the first to remove that blight. In Tel-Aviv, they had built a thriving city of nearly 200,000 — a thoroughly civilized community with tree-shaded boulevards, with opera and theatre and art galleries, with playgrounds, modern schools with buses, and apartment houses. I had no idea that in Tel-Aviv you could stand on a street corner and say – "This might be any modern American town." But you could! And I thought to myself: Here before my eyes is proof that Palestine Jewry is bringing civilization to the Middle East. (pp. 195-196).[22]

According to westerners imbued with this variety of pure and naked materialism, poverty and backwardness are not misfortunes which entitle those afflicted with it to sympathetic assitance but rather constitute such unpardonable crimes that if the Arabs are judged by zionism as guilty they deserve no human rights at all.

The late Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (d. 1962), one of the most zealous of American Christians in her support for Zionism, justifies the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs on the curious pretext:

> Prejudices must be put aside and the whole refugee problem looked upon as an economic one. The industry and energy of the Jews of Israel, the skills, the organizing ability and techni-

22. *Behind the Silken Curtain*, Bartley C. Crum, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1947.

cal knowledge they brought with them from Europe, if applied to the problem of the Arab economy, could do much to raise the standard of living in every country of the area. Instead, the Arabs want only to wipe out the Israelis. Even if this were possible, such a war would be a grievous thing. Although the Arabs would gain some land and the refugees could return to what homes they left, they would not put into tho country the intelligent work that the Jews have done. All development would stop. The land would deteriorate; barren plains and dry deserts would reappear where tree-planted fields and productive farms and industries now flourish. The loss would not be only to the people of Israel but to the future economic development of the entire Middle East.[23]

But this picture, widely accepted among westerners as it is, is thoroughly distorted, ignoring the fact that a significant number of urban, upper-class Palestinians are as highly-educated in the modern manner, sophisticated and cosmopolitan as any Israeli :

The professional class among the Palestinian refugees are the most westernized group in Jordan. All but two whom I interviewed spoke English fluently. Indeed, one of the women was so westernized that she could read Arabic only with difficulty. Half of the group had travelled in Europe and 23 of them regularly read such American periodicals as "The New York Times," "Time Magazine," "Life" "Ladies", Home Journal," and "Vogue." Striking evidence of their modernization was a strong preference for western music. One of them complained, "The Arabic music of the local radio stations is not applicable for the educated classes." A high-ranking civil servant explained his cosmopolitan tastes more fully. "The musical programmes from Turkey are varied every night. One night they have a very nice selection of Greek Tango — really very sensational. Another night they have American pop music — jazz and swing,

23. *India and the Awakening East,* Eleanor Roosevelt, Harper and Brothers, New York 1953, pp 33-34.

which is also very refreshing. On still another occasion they have an excellent series of classics — Beethoven and Schubert.[24]

Now it matters not ta all to the West how thoroughly westernized these Palestinians are — for they cannot change the fact that they are still Arabs and therefore classified as non-Europeans and thus, despite their uncritical adoration of Western culture, despised as outcasts. What benefits have these Palestinians derived from westernization?

The very culture they have adopted is directly responsible for their arbitrary deprivation of all political rights, their homeland, their loss of nationality, their homelessness, rootlessness and exile and the justification it provides the alien Jewish immigrants to continue living on their stolen property. In these respects, the Christian Palestinians have fared no better than the Muslims and the affluent urban intelligentsia have been just as thoroughly and efficiently dispossessed by the Israelis as the most illiterate *fellahin* and *beduin*.

24. *The Passing of the Traditional Society : Modernizing the Middle East*, op. cit. pp. 344-345.

Is Western Civilization Universal?

Section:III.

The U.S.S.R. is often cited by Western experts as a most spectacular model of the successful modernization of a backward, non-European land. But racially, the Slavic Russians are white Europeans although before the reign of Peter the Great their culture was derived from Oriental Byzantium. In its essence, Russian imperialism was and is no different from the imperialism of any other European power and just as oppressive, if not more so. The historical record of Russia in her treatment of racial and ethnic minorities is just as black as that of America.

Under Communism as much as under the previous reign of the Czars, the U.S.S.R. is completely dominated by the Slavic Russians. Very few members of other racial and ethnic groups have attained key positions of power and leadership. Just as under the tyranny of the Czars, under the despotism of Communism the Slavic Russians have not hesitated to resort to the genocide of entire racial and ethnic groups wherever expediency dictated.

There remains one nation yet to be discussed, Japan, no doubt the most outstanding example of the modernization of any non-European land. Japan is most remarkable of all because the Japanese are non-Christians, non-whites and non-Europeans. Alone among all the countries of Asia, Japan is a thoroughly "developed" industrialized country with a first-class efficient system of universal compulsory education resulting in a population almost 100% literate and living standards comparable to many parts of Europe. The sophisticated products of Japaness industry today, in great demand throughout the world, attain the best international standards. Now to all appearances, the

example of Japan would seem to be sufficient proof that Western civilization is universal, transcending the barriers of race, creed and geography.

But what of the fate of the Japanese during World War II? Although I was then only a child, I retain vivid memories of the intense anti-Japanese propaganda launched by American leaders during those war years. It made a tremendous impression on me, young as I was, for everywhere you looked and everything you heard — whether over the radio, the press or the cinema—singled out the Japanese as a target for hatred, ridicule and contempt. In those days we called the Japanese "Japs' and all the cartoons in the comic books I used to read exaggerated their peculiar racial characteristics for us children to make fun of - their ugly yellowish complexion, slanting eyes, distorted with thick, horn-rimmed spectacles and hideous yellow buck teeth.

American citizens of Japenese origin were placed under strict surveillance. In California where most of them live, thousands were incarcerated in concentration camps throughout the duration of the war. It did not matter that, for the most part, these Japanese-Americans were as loyal as any other Americans and that among those indiscriminately held under detention many had fathers, brothers and sons distinguishing themselves in the American armed forces. Although America was at war with Germany too, Americans of German origin suffered no disabilities or restrictions.

It is therefore no coincidence that in August 1945, America dropped the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagaseaki. neither of these cities had any strategic military importance. They were purely civilian targets and all the victims of this mass-slaughter were innocent civilians, including numerous women, children and infants. Even today, after more than a quarter of a century, people in Japan are still suffering and dying because of the long-term effects of atomic radiation. A year later, in 1946, amid the glare of publicity. the historic trials of the Nazi war criminals took place in Nuremberg but curiously, no western government even considered bringing to trial those Americans responsible for dropping the atomic bombs which

certainly equalled, if not exceeded in horror, anything the Nazis ever did. Instead, the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was shamelessly justified and defended as a useful and constructive action to hasten the end of the war. Of course, it was known by 1945 that Japan was already clearly the loser and would have surrendered anyhow, but sacrifice of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was assumed to be essential to save the American lives that presumably would have been lost had the invasion of Japan been undertaken. The value of Japanese lives was not worth considering for they, after all, despite all their modernization and westernization, were still "Orientals", and Oriental blood is cheap. It is significant that nuclear weapons were never used against Germany.

By this stage, the reader should be convinced of Western civilization's parochial character, so that despite its world-wide dominance due to its superior energy, organization and technology, its benefits are reserved for white Europeans only and its deep-rooted racial prejudices and materialistic concept of life result in the absence of any genuine feelings of universal human brotherhood.

Is there any other civilization which can justly claim universality?

Before European Imperialism arrived on the scene in the 16th century, the civilization produced by Islam was the most cosmopolitan international and extensive in area that had ever appeared in recorded history. For more than a thousand years, politically, and culturally, Islam reigned Supreme overall of Northern Africa, Western Asia, large areas of Central Asia, spread rapidly to india, even into China, clear into the Pacific Ocean to Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Spain was under Islamic rulefor seven centuries and due to the rising power of the Ottoman Turks, Islamic culture strongly influenced much of South-Eastern Europe as well.

Converts flocked to the fold of Islam from all races—black, brown, yellow, and white. Economically the Islamic world prospered by its intensive, long-distance international trade and commerce. Muslim merchants and tradesmen who were often zealous missionaries, were the most adventurous and daring travellers and explorers. Only the Polar regions, Australia and the

New World were unknown to them. The universality of Islam and the civilization it produced is all the more remarkable because all this was achieved without the assistance of any of the modern, mechanical means of communication and transportation.

Most of the major historic religions and non-Western civilizations were and still are, parochial, Judaism and Hinduism being among the most extreme, excluding outsiders on principle. Even Christianity, which is supposed to be an international proselytising faith with organized missionary activity everywhere, is inextricably bound up with the history of Europe and shaped by its cultural atomsphere. To prove that, historically, Western civilization and Christianity are inseparable, a prominent American missionary writes :

> The Roman Catholic and Protestant missionary is not simply a Christian: he is always a *Western* Christian, carrying with him the fresh and modern outlook of the western world as well as the Gospel of Christ. The missionary never fails to identify his Christian faith with Progress and social concern, which Eastern religions seldom include.[25]

Thus historic Christianity and Westeren cultural and political imperialism are inseparable.

The universality of Islam is proclaimed at the outset by the Divine revelation of the Qur'an :

> O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes that you may know and understand one another. Lo! the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most righteous. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware. (LIX:15)

The Qur'an also repeatedly refers to the different races, colours and languages of mankind as among the signs of Divine Creation.

25. John S. Badeau, *The Lands Between : the Middle East*, Friendship Press, New York, 1958, p. 105.

The Hadith are even more explicit. Preached the Holy Prophet during his historic Farewell Address in Mecca during the Haj (11 A.H.)

> O people! Verily your Lord is one and the forefather of all of you is one. All of you are descended from Adam and Adam was created from earth. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab over an Arab nor a white skin over a black skin except in piety. Verily, the noblest among you is he who is the most pious.[26]

In contrast to the materialistic outlook of Western culture which is determined by the vagaries of opportunism and expediency, releasing the sordid human instincts of greed, ambition and cruelty in full force, the supreme authority of the Qur'an as infallible Divine revelation bestows on its believers a universal sense of values, a human dignity and self-respect and a constructive meaning and purpose to life, transcending all limitations of time and place.

The Shariah is a universal law, excluding nobody — believer or non-believer, from its all-embracing scope. So long as it was adhered to, the absolute, transcendental authority based on the fear of God and reward from punishment in the Hereafter as the source of ethical behaviour, safeguarded the Muslim community from all the moral anarchy, social unrest and disruption and the human degradation we see everywhere around us today.

The all-inclusiveness of Islam was evident from the start. Included among the most esteemed *Sahabah* (Companions of the Prophet) was Zaid, whom the Prophet emancipated from slavery and then adopted as his son and finally placed in command of the Muslim army where he was martyred fighting in Syria; Bilal, the Abyssinian whom the Prophet appointed as the first Muezzin to summon the people to prayers; Suhail, a Roman; and Salman, the Persian – all of whom have always been respected by Muslims everywhere as much as the Prophet's Arab followers. Among the Mothers of the Believers,—the

26. Maulana Ubaidul Akbar, *Orations of Muhammad*, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1955, pp. 95-96.

Prophet's wives – were Marya, the Egyption Copt, and Safiya, whose father were a Jewish chieftan. Among the masters of the Hadith the *Shariah*, and theologians and Divines as well as celebrities in the arts and sciences, appear many more non-Arabs of varied national and racial origins than Arabs even though they wrote most of their works in Arabic. This proves that peoples of all nationalities and races enthuiastically participated in Islamic civilization on equal terms and that the blight of nationalism and imperalism was unknown to them.

Contrast the ruthless policies of the "civilized" West towards aboriginal peoples with the humane, civilizing methods of the Muslims. Writes an English orientalist :

> The marvellous success that has been achieved in Africa and Indonesia in propagating Islam and its way of life has been largely the work of traders and merchants who have won the hearts of the natives by learning their language, adopting their manners and customs and settling down and marrying their women, all the while quietly spreading the knowledge of their faith, first by converting the native women they married and the persons associated with them in their business relations. Instead of holding themselves apart in proud isolation, they gradually melted into the mass of the population, employing all the superiority of their intelligence and civilization for the work of conversion.[27]

Thus many primitive peoples were civilized by the enlightenment of Islam without resort to genocide or forced assimilation , racial persecution or any of the dehumanizing degradation and social disruption that have invariably accompanied the westernization of non-Europeans.

27. Thomas William Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1965, p. 409.

Islam did not present its conception of the equality of man as an idle philosophy. It actually established a society based on that concept:

In that society, it united the different races, and discrimination based on colour, language and nationality were eradicated. Not only that, it also established a world state on the basis of this same ideology and worked it successfully. The entire Muslim world was governed by the same law. All Muslims formed one family.

If a person, irrespective of whether he came from the East or West, accepted Islam, he immediately became a member of the Islamic society and enjoyed the same rights and privileges. Whether one was a Negro, an Iranian, a Copt, or a Berber, he stood on the same footing in Muslim society after accepting Islam as did the kith and kin of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Arab followers. His social status was equal to theirs.

He could acquire the greatest eminence in the *Ummah* (Muslim community) on the basis of his moral qualities and character. The believer in Islam, whatever his racial links, place of origin, mother tongue or colour, is a brother to every other Muslim and wherever he moves in a Muslim society, he enjoys the same privileges as other Muslims do. A Muslim from any part of the world could go to any Muslim land without any restrictions, move freely in that country, stay there as long as he wished, engage in any trade, secure the highest government post in that country and marry without difficulty.

Islamic history is replete with instances where a Muslim went out of his country and lived in other Muslim lands for decades. He might have studied in one country, engaged in business in another, become a minister or commander-in-chief of the army in a third one, and then he might even go over to yet another country, settle there and get married. A well-known example is Ibn Batuta who, during the 15th century of the Christain era, travelled through all the Muslim countries for twenty-seven years. He did not need a passport or a visa to go to any of these countries. Nowhere

was he questioned about his nationality. Nowhere did he find any difficulty in earning his living. He needed no perimt to visit any place nor was any period fixed by the authorities for his stay. If he sought employment under any government, he was appointed without difficulty. From his native Morocco, he reached India during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq. The fact that he had travelled from the farthest corner of north-west Africa never came in the way of his appointment as a magistrate in India. Afterwards the Indian Sultan sent him to China as his ambassador. That proves that nothing barred his entering into diplomatic service. It clearly shows that at this time not only the idea of commonwealth but also common citizenship of the *Ummah* was fully operative.

The manpower of the entire Islamic world was available to any Muslim country. The defence and protection of the world of Islam was the common responsibility of all Muslims. Until the beginning of the 19th century, these conditions prevailed in the Muslim world. What greater proof could there be of the fact that Islam not only furnished the theoretical and ideological basis of a world state and a world government that leading Western thinkers have been yearning for since World War It! In fact it brought such a state into being and worked it effectively for centuries.[28]

And here is the honest confession of one American who for the first time in his life, experienced during the *Haj*. the exhilaration of genuine universal human brotherhood :

I only knew what I had left in America and how. it contrasted with what I found in the Muslim world. About twenty of us Muslims who had completed the Haj were sitting cross-legged together in a huge tent on Mount Arafat. As a Muslim from America, I was the centre of attention. They asked me

28. Sayyid Abul Ala Maudoodi, *The Unity of the Muslim World*, Islamic Publication, Lahore, July 1967.

what about the Haj had impressed me the most. One who spoke English translated my answers to their questions into Arabic for the others.

> "Here I am among tens of thousands *Hajis* from all over world. They are of all colours from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that all my experiences in America had convinced me could never exist between the white and the non-white. During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) while praying to the same God — with fellow Muslims whose eyes were the bluest, whose hair was the blondest of blond and whose skin was the whitest of white, and in the words and actions and deeds of the "white" Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana.
>
> We were all truly brothers because our faith in the One God had removed the "white" from their minds, the "white" from their behaviour and the "white" from their attitude. I could see from this that if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps they too could accept in reality and wholehearted practice, the Oneness of man.[29]

All the foregoing arguments should convince the reader of one glaring fact: that however much, in order to avoid the stigma of "backwardness "and be praised as "progressive," we Muslims might submerge our identity and indigenous culture by adopting the Western outlook, ape the West in dress, fashions, tastes, customes, mode of living and social organization and enthusiastically submit to the most abject intellectual and spiritual slavery until hardly a trace remains of our past heritage, *yet* the Westerners will **NEVER** accept us on a plane of equality with themselves. All our efforts at westernization will

29. *The Autobiography of Malcolm-X,* Grove Press, New York, 1965, p. 342

never succeed in raisinig to the material and cultural level of the West. All we will ever be able to do is imitate and an imitation is always a poor copy of the original. An uncritical and blind adoption of western standards will certainly doom us in the future to a permanent status of inferiority and eventual extinction. Is this what we want for ourselves and our children?

Why, then, should we deprive ourselves of the material and spiritual benefits of being true Muslim? If we suffer loss in this world, Allah will surely compensate us in the Hereafter, which is the real triumph. And, once Muslims throughout the world discover the full potentialities of the faith of Islam, establish a full-blooded Islamic state and unite against its adversaries in the spirit of *Jihad*, no power on earth can harm us. Rather, the whole world, including the West, will be compelled to look to us for the effective cures Islam offers as remedies for man's social, political, economic and moral diseases.



Few Important Intellectual piece of writings Authored by Maryam Jameelah.

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2. **Westernisation and Human Welfare.**
3. **Western Imperialism Menaces Muslims.**
4. **Why I Embraced Islam.**
5. **Islam Face to Face with Current Crisis.**
6. **Islam and Modern Man.**
7. **Islam and Our Social Habits.**
8. **Islamic Culture in Theory and Practice.**
9. **Islam and the Muslim Woman Today.**
10. **Islam Versus the West.**
11. **Correspondence Between Maulana Maudoodi And Maryam Jameelah.**
12. **Two Mujahidin Of The Recent Past And Their Struggle For Freedom Against Foreign Rule.**
13. **Is Western Civilization Universal ?** (kurf)
14. **Shaikh Hassan Al Banna & Al Ikhwan Al Muslimun.**
15. **The Generation Gap : Its Causes & Consequences.**
16. **Westernization Varsus Muslims.**

Is Western Civilization Universal ?

by

Maryam Jameelah.

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